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SIPDIS

RIYADH, PLEASE PASS TO DHAHRAN; LONDON FOR GOLDRICH; PARIS
FOR ZEYA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KISL](#)

SUBJECT: MOSQUE SERMONS IN SAUDI ARABIA: AVOID WASTING TIME
DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS; CRITICISM OF VIOLENCE IN THE
KINGDOM

Classified By: ACTING CONSUL GENERAL CAROL KALIN
FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d).

11. (C) Summary: In Friday, July 1 sermons, imams in Mecca and Medina noted the start of the summer holiday season in Saudi Arabia by reminding congregants of the "dangers" of wasting time. In Mecca, the imam also criticized "deviants" who had caused bloodshed and violence in Saudi Arabia, and prayed for the success of the Saudi leader. Meanwhile, in the Eastern Province, the imam at the Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal Mosque in Khobar questioned Arab leaders for not defending the rights of their people and indirectly criticized Saudis for their poor treatment of non-Arab Muslims. Mosques in Riyadh focused on the importance of prayer and the ritual duties of Islam. Reports suggest that due to the closure of Saudi schools for the summer, many people have left for vacations resulting in noticeably lower attendance at Friday sermons. End summary.

FROM THE GRAND MOSQUE IN MECCA: THE DANGERS OF WASTING TIME;
VIOLENCE IN THE KINGDOM

12. (U) In Mecca, Shaykh Salih al-Talib delivered a July 1 sermon at the Grand Mosque stating that while Islam allowed Muslims to take a rest during the summer holidays, such rest and recreation should not violate the teachings of Islam, or waste time. He added that Muslims should avoid idleness and the abandonment of Islamic duties during the holiday season. "Laziness and idleness are a serious disease, which reflects negatively on individuals and societies, and leads to poverty."

13. (U) The imam also criticized violence in Saudi Arabia, regretting that some youths have deviated from sound beliefs. "Such a deviation leads to killing and bloodshed in confrontations between two Muslim parties in the country of the two holy mosques. Fair people, as well as thoroughly versed ulema, have said their word. Will you stop this? Much blood has been shed-- blood, which should have been used for construction in accordance with the ulema's (religious authority's) advice and the teachings of the last of the prophets. As an adviser, I appeal to those who have departed from the group and committed a mistake to return, or turn themselves in and repent." Al-Talib concluded by praying for the success of the Saudi leader.

MEDINA IMAM ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT IDLENESS IN THE SUMMER

14. (U) At the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, Shaykh Ali Abd-al-Rahman al-Hudhayfi urged Muslims to use the summer holidays to do good deeds and carry out their religious duties. He decried young men wasting their time in the summer, damaging their health, and missing opportunities. He urged parents to encourage their children to attend scientific courses and read the Koran over the summer. He stated that happiness lies in the worship of God, while laziness results in unhappiness.

IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE, CRITICISM OF ARAB LEADERS; CALLS FOR
EQUALITY AMONG MUSLIMS

15. (C) At the Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal Mosque in al-Khobar, the imam harshly addressed Arab leaders for not standing up for the rights of their own people. He also indirectly criticized Saudis for their poor treatment of non-Arab Muslims. For example, the imam criticized people who do not care about the fate of Pakistani or Afghani detainees at Guantanamo Bay, but instead focus on the fate of the Saudi prisoners. "Since when is Islam defined by trivialities, such as national borders, a person's nationality and other worldly concerns?" he asked. "It makes one wonder who was included in the Prophet Muhammad's message, was it the people of the Middle East or was it the rest of the world?"

16. (C) The imam underscored his point by telling the congregants that "Christians and Jews are much better than us in this department," because they "care what happens to their own. They even care what happens to their Muslim citizens." He subsequently returned to the subject of Guantanamo Bay, stating that the British, French, Germans, Italians, and Australians all have succeeded in securing the release of

their nationals. "Their nationals were Muslims, but this did not prevent these countries from making the effort. What a shame!"

17. (C) Finally, the imam harshly criticized Arab leaders for not caring about their people, and decried the "ignorant scholars and yellow leaders who neither care for Muslims nor possess the will to help them." The imam prayed for God "to bestow us with better leaders whom we can be proud of."

IN RIYADH, IMAMS REMAIN FOCUSED ON PRAYER, RITUAL ISLAMIC DUTIES

18. (C) At the Al Hessey Mosque in Riyadh, Shaykh Abdul Rahman stressed the importance of prayer, which he stated is the primary distinguishing factor between a Muslim and a non-Muslim. He also reminded congregants to perform the ritual duties of Islam, and prayed for the dignity of Muslims and Muslim leaders. Contacts in Riyadh did not report any mention in this week's sermons of disrespect of the Quran by non-Muslims, support for "mujahedeen" groups, or criticism of terrorists operating in the Kingdom.

KALIN